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THE BAPTIST

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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## China Christian leader applauds growth

WASHINGTON (BP) — Growth brings not only joys but challenges, Wenzao Han, president of the China Christian Council (CCC), said in a Dec. 17 visit to the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) headquarters in Washington.

Wenzao addressed a group of Washington-area pastors during his visit and, in an interview, recounted his comments.

Wenzao said the church in China continues to experience rapid growth, while the nation's strong economy has made life easier and more relaxed for many people. However, he said, the rapid church growth and China's economic reforms, which have given more money to many Chinese, have brought many challenges for the church.

Every two days, Wenzao said, three CCC-related churches are planted. He said some of the fastest growth is in the provinces of Henan, with more than 1.57 million people; Anhui, 1.5 million; Zhejiang, 1.3 million; and Xinjiang, 1 million. Most new Christians are baptized by believer's baptism, Wenzao said.

Wenzao said there are approximately 12 million Christians in China. Reports that speak of 40 million to 60 million believers are "inflated

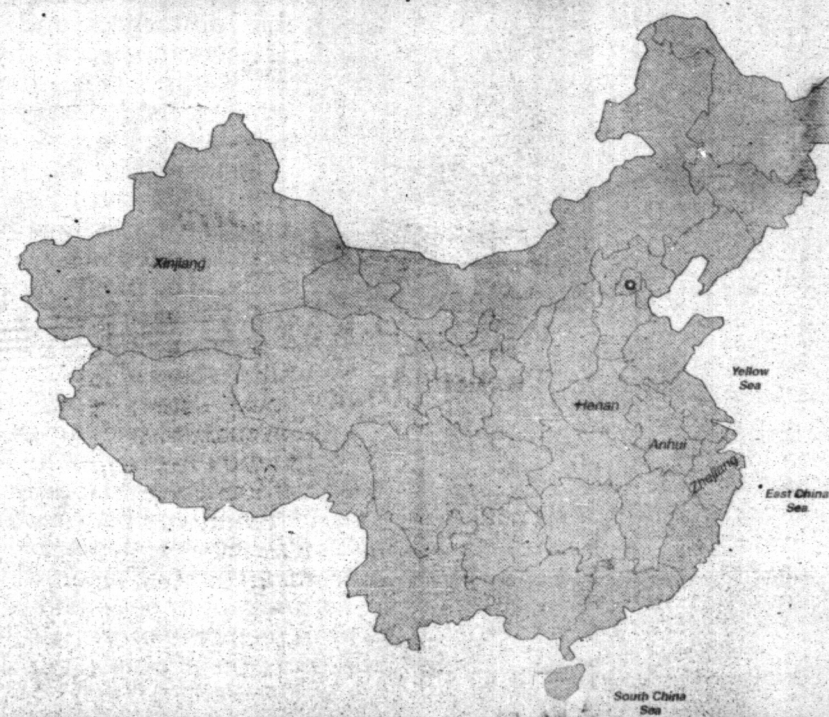
numbers," he said, noting that he believes such numbers are given by those who want to show the need for missionary workers in China and by others who want to discredit the CCC.

"The Chinese church has a strong evangelical influence," Wenzao said, "but we do not have enough trained theological leaders to give proper pastoral care, and this leads to heretical teachings, especially in the rural areas. We want to build our church on the Rock."

"Personality conflicts and power struggles" also are plaguing the church, Wenzao said. "People are finding it difficult to get along with each other in easier times."

With the eyes of the business and religious worlds focused on China, Wenzao commented: "Everyone sees China as a mission field, and we in the CCC want to work with others. Self-isolation is not one of our goals, but Christianity done in the Western way is threatening, and this affects our relationship with the government."

"It is so important to preserve the church. We know the situation best," said Wenzao, who like many Christian leaders faced persecution during the Cultural Revolution and thus is fiercely



protective about the church in China. "We have done quite a lot to do away with the foreign influence of Christianity," he said.

Concerning the persecution of believers, including those in "meeting points" as Wenzao called home churches, he acknowledged problems with freedom of worship for meeting points especially at local levels of government, but he pointed out freedom of worship is constitutionally guaranteed.

Wenzao said the CCC has been consulted by the Chinese government on a white paper on religious freedom, and "the government listened to us" in deliberations several years ago on the "144 Decree on Religion" stipulating the relationship between the government and religion in China. Not all of the meeting points are hostile to the CCC, Wenzao said, "and we

provide Bibles to all who ask."

In the interview, Wenzao was not asked about a charge he made in November that the International Mission Board (IMB) is "secretly" sending "church workers from abroad ... to carry out missionary work in China" without consulting CCC.

IMB President Jerry Rankin has affirmed an IMB commitment to a multi-channel approach to service and ministry in China in lieu of an exclusive approach requested by CCC.

No question about the controversy was posed to Wenzao out of a BWA concern that the world body not become a party in the controversy.

Wenzao also received an honorary doctorate degree from Samford University, a Baptist-related college in Birmingham, Ala.

### Baptist Book Stores / Lifeway Christian Stores best sellers

#### HARDBACK

1. Just As I Am, Billy Graham (Zondervan)
2. Great House of God, Max Lucado (Word)
3. Complete Book of Baby & Child Care, Dobson (Focus on the Family)
4. Experiencing God Day by Day, Henry Blackaby (B&H)
5. The Weigh Down Diet, Gwen Shamblin (Doubleday)
6. What's So Amazing About Grace, Philip Yancy (Zondervan)
7. Purpose Driven Church, Rick Warren (Zondervan)
8. In the Grip of Grace, Max Lucado (Word)
9. Experiencing God, Henry Blackaby & Claude King (B&H)
10. David, Charles Swindoll (Word)

#### PAPERBACK

1. Stories from the Heart, Various (Multnomah)
2. Morning and Evening, Charles Spurgeon (Whitaker House)
3. When I'm On My Knees, Donihue (Barbour)
4. More Stories From the Heart, Various (Multnomah)
5. Five Love Language, Gary Chapman (Moody)
6. Living Somewhere Between Estrogen and Death, Barbara Johnson (Word)
7. What Happens When Women Pray, Evelyn Christenson (Chariot/Victor)
8. 15 Minutes Along With God, Emily Barnes (Harvest)
9. WWJD (Bob Siemon)
10. New Foxe's Book of Martyrs, Compiled (Whitaker House)

### WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

YEC packs coliseum

Garaywa expands

Baptist College News

Names in the News

### Looking back

#### 10 years ago

The deacon body of Arbor Grove Church, Houston, honor their oldest deacon, Cecil Vanlandingham, by presenting him with a certificate of appreciation and a watch. Vanlandingham, who turned 90 in September, is still an active deacon. Wayne King is pastor.

#### 20 years ago

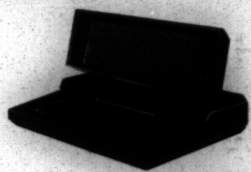
Sylvarena Church, Sylvarena, burns the note of indebtedness on their pastorium after a "Make It Up" Sunday offering came in \$2,000 above the regular church offering. Jerry Barlow is pastor.

#### 50 years ago

Two young ladies of Iuka Church surrender for full-time Christian work: Peggy Sanders is preparing herself for foreign mission work, while Julie Rhodes is preparing to do home mission work in the field of music.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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# An early New Year's jolt

**I**t never fails. With the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" still strong in our ears and optimism building for the dawning new year, something always brings us back to reality with a jolt.

Southern Baptists got the dreaded jolt this year a little earlier than usual, with the announcement in the last few weeks of 1997 that disgruntled members of yet another state Baptist convention are preparing to split from the main body.

Kentucky will apparently begin 1998 with two distinct state Baptist conventions, joining Texas and Virginia in a trio of "old line" Southern Baptist states in which irreconcilable differences and factionalism have culminated in division of the fellowship. The same fate may befall several other state conventions before the close of 1998.

Listening to the squabbles has been like enduring multiple bitter divorce proceedings within one's own immediate family. There seems to be plenty of criticism to go around, and plenty of folks willing to point fingers at their spiritual brothers and sisters.

As is often the case in such messy divorces, no one can see the plank in their own eye (Matt. 7:3-5). Harsh words are uttered, inappropriate accusations are made, and half-truths mixed with innuendo carry the debate.

Brother is pitted against brother, and scores are kept to be settled at a later time. Neutral members of the family are wooed with promises of political power and prestigious positions. All sides are confident of eventual victory. A win-at-all-costs strategy is put into play.

Southern Baptists are not new to this game, of course. The 20-year pitched battle for control of the national denomination claimed as many innocent victims as combatants. Now, it seems, at least some of the

state conventions have decided to go down the same path.

As we turn inward and consume ourselves at yet another level, a lost world as always continues to await the gospel. Therein lies the tragedy.

The denomination that pours its resources into world evangelism on a scale unprecedented in the Protestant world is also a denomination that indulges fratricide. Southern Baptists have a burning passion to reach sinners on the other side of the globe, but often can't relate to their Christian brother in the next seat.

What a mixed message that must be to the unreached. Do we love everyone in Christ, or just the people who agree with us? Do we welcome all people into our fellowship, or just the ones who promise to "vote right?" Are we a mass gathering of focused believers, or simply another political party?

We were given a clear mandate by our Savior (Matt. 28:18-20). Surely our infighting causes him grief when he explained our mission so plainly and simply. We sin when our worldly ambitions and self-absorption adulterate the Great Commission he gave us.

Mississippi Baptists have spoken with one voice on this issue. There is no doubt that "priority one" is to help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. That's not just a slogan. We back up those words with our time, talent, and treasure on scales unmatched in



the Southern Baptist Convention.

God can use Mississippi Baptists as a model to bring the warmongers to their senses across the Southern Baptist Convention. We can set the standard for Christian conduct in places where there don't appear to be any standards at all.

We have chosen not to be a part of the problem; we should pray that God will make us part of the solution.

If we are completely submitted to his will, be assured he will find a way.

## GUEST OPINION:



### Words, words, words

By Joseph F. Fritz, member  
Alta Woods Church, Jackson

- ◆ "New Age" for Hinduism.
- ◆ "physician-assisted suicide" for euthanasia.
- ◆ "spirits" for hard liquor.

Seldom does a day pass without Christians being bombarded with some of these deceptive euphemisms. Sadly, we have often used such words. It is particularly distressing to hear respected preachers and evangelical commentators say "gay," "choice," etc. without a second thought.

They have fallen into the clever trap set by the humanist crowd who want us to believe that homosexual behavior is truly gay, that a mother-to-be carries a fetus instead of a baby (with a legitimate choice to kill it), and so on. Careless use of these words means that the intended message spread by good people is diminished and even lost.

What to do? Although many of us are trying to stem this tide of bad influences, more can be done. I believe that evangelical Christians of all denominations must consider themselves to be in a real war with evil forces.

We must as individuals counteract with our personal versions of good influences. This must be done on a hourly basis, and the war must be viewed as never-ending, rather than as a single battle. Our mindsets must be expanded so that we will:

- ◆ have a heightened awareness of the morality-robbing shots that are fired at us daily from TV, schools, governmental and corporate directives, etc. Especially we need to be aware of the terminology used upon us, and the hidden meanings behind much of it.

- ◆ decide which items we like and which we don't like — in other words, distance ourselves from moral relativism and return to right and wrong thinking instead of remaining in the non-committal gray area which does not distinguish between the two.

◆ become involved. This means activity on many fronts simultaneously. Our words, our contacts with friends and family, the organizations we join, the influencing of our churches (many of which are so concerned with numbers that they are reluctant to offend anybody), the places we go, etc. are some of the ways to spread our influences. The most important of these is words.

Language should be an instrument for expressing thoughts, clearly and accurately. Christians have for two generations been subjected to the clear, but inaccurate, doublespeak used by the humanists to push their non-Christian agendas.

We also have our agenda, the one left by Jesus, and it's time to again make it the dominant one in our world. The words used by active Christians will win for our side if we will but use them correctly.

Fritz is a Jackson-based businessman.



# NOBTS offers bivocational music, education courses

A new cycle of New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) courses for Mississippi bivocational music directors and education workers will be offered beginning Jan. 19 at several locations around the state.

Each student who completes the eight-course music cycle earns a Church Music Certificate from NOBTS, plus eight hours credit toward an on-campus degree.

There is a one-time registration fee of \$25. The cost of each course is \$75.

"Project 25" is a cooperative effort of NOBTS, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, and Baptist Sunday School Board to grant \$100 for the registration fee and first course cost to the first 25 bivocational music directors who register.

The grants are available for both the music and education courses. Students already enrolled in the program are not eligible, and the grant is limited to one person per church.

The third course in the music cycle, "Reading Music; Rhythm/Pitch," will be held at:

◆ First Church, Columbus. 7-9 p.m., beginning Jan. 20. Ed Nix, teacher.

◆ Broadmoor Church, Jackson. 7-9 p.m., beginning Jan. 20. Jimmy McCaleb, teacher.

◆ First Church, Purvis. 6:30-8:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 20. James Hayes, teacher.

◆ Bogue Chitto Church, Bogue Chitto. 6:30-8:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 20. Joe Elliott, teacher.

◆ First Church, Booneville. 7-9 p.m., beginning Jan. 19.

LuAnne Ford, teacher.

◆ Northcrest Church, Meridian. 6:30-8:30 p.m., beginning Jan. 19. Buddy McElroy, teacher.

Additional classes may be organized in other locations around the state where 10-12 students are interested in enrolling.

NOBTS is also offering a series of eight courses to train laypeople in churches to serve as bivocational educational workers. Those courses will begin the week of Jan. 19 in Purvis, Jackson, and Columbus. Courses may also be offered in Booneville if as many as ten people enroll for the course.

Each course meets one night per week for eight weeks. Registration fees, course fees, and Project 25 rules apply to

these courses also.

The first course in January will be "Developing leadership skills." The second course beginning in March is entitled, "Developing Leaders in the Church."

NOBTS will grant a certificate to students who complete all eight bivocational education courses courses.

For more information, contact coordinator Chester Vaughn, 268 Northpointe Parkway, Jackson, MS 39211. Telephone: (601) 956-6285.

## THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

# Record

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# YEC overflows Miss. College coliseum

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

A. E. Wood Coliseum on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton was filled to capacity Dec. 29-30 for the 1997 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC).

According to Don Lum, youth consultant for the Department of Evangelism of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), over 2,800 youth and their sponsors representing 193 churches registered for the annual Christmas break event.

Lum also reported that 31 young people made professions of faith, along with 50 rededications and other decisions. Most of the decisions came on Monday night at the invitation given by the contemporary Christian music group NewSong.

"We are so privileged in Mississippi to have a conference of this quality for our students to attend," Lum said.

"It is both exciting and humbling to look at that packed coliseum and realize that we are training our future church leaders. Our ministers, Sunday School teachers, Woman's

Missionary Union leaders, and deacons will come from this group," he added.

Lum noted that attendance would have been even higher except for the fact that snow over the weekend in the northeastern part of the state kept away at least 10 churches who had pre-registered.

The snowstorm of that weekend also caused YEC keynote speaker Ike Reighard to cancel. Reighard is the senior pastor of Northstar church in Kennesaw, Ga.

In his place, Jackson pastors Jim Futral, of Broadmoor Church, and Frank Pollard, of First Church, brought the Monday afternoon and Tuesday afternoon messages.

Dennis Lee, a ventriloquist from Dallas, and the "Nana Puddin' Bunch," filled the other vacant preaching slot caused by Reighard's absence. Lee and his puppet friends also entertained at various times during the conference.

In addition, Hattiesburg native Reggie Smith and his wife Ladye Love led music for each session.

"Our kids especially liked Dennis Lee," said Jeff Holeman, youth minister at First

Church, Kosciusko. "They were challenged more by him than by anybody."

Holeman makes a point to bring a group to YEC each year. "It is a good conference at a good time," he said. "They get to see other kids from around the state. It's sort of like a family reunion with worship," Holeman added.

Lum noted that lives would never be touched each year at YEC were it not for the adults — parents, Sunday School teachers, and staff — who make attendance a priority.

"Thank you, adults, for making the YEC such a wonderful event in the lives of teenagers. Without you being willing to give of your time and energy for teenagers, they couldn't come," Lum said.

This year's conference also attracted the attention of two Jackson area television stations and print media. Both WLBT Channels 3 and WJTV-TV Channel 12 sent reporters and showed footage of the conference on their news programs for a period of two days.

Extensive video footage was shown of the overflow crowd in worship and praise, and MBCB Evangelism Director Sonny Adkins was featured in a number of interviews.

The Clarion-Ledger newspaper in Jackson also covered the event and provided extensive coverage in the next day's edition.

The 1998 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference is planned for Dec. 28-29, and will again be on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton.

For more information, contact Lum at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, Ms 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside the Jackson area (800) 748-1651.



CROWD PLEASERS — Dallas ventriloquist Dennis Lee (above) and "Eliza Jane," as well as Ladye Love Smith (below) of Nashville, performed at the 1997 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference.



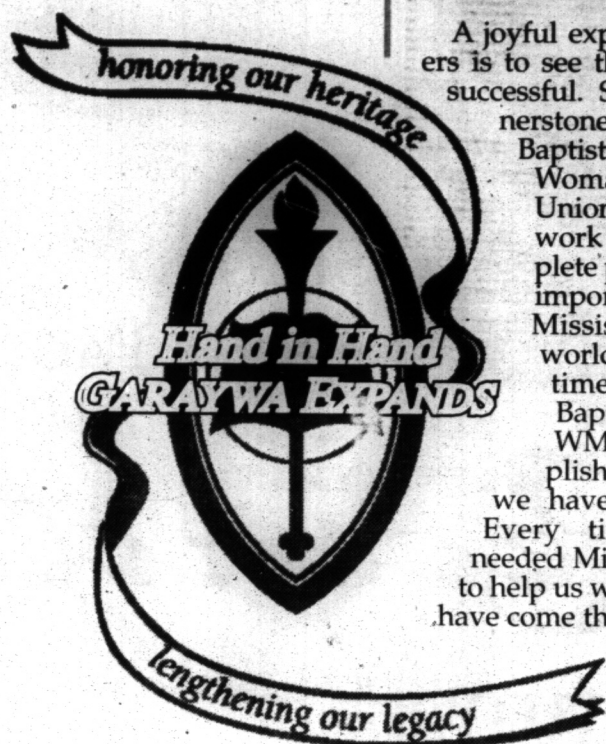
FILLED UP — A near capacity crowd fills A. E. Wood Coliseum on the Mississippi College campus in Clinton during the 1997 Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference on Dec. 29 and 30. During the conference over 30 students made professions of faith, with 50 other decisions also registered. (Photos by Carl M. White)





# 'Hand in Hand' Garaywa kit now available

By Wilda Fancher  
Special Correspondent



A joyful experience for leaders is to see their followers be successful. Success is a cornerstone for Mississippi Baptists and Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) as we work together to complete projects we count important to bringing Mississippi and the world to Jesus. Every time Mississippi Baptists have needed WMU to help accomplish a special project, we have come through. Every time WMU has needed Mississippi Baptists to help us with a project, you have come through.

A 50-year project has been Camp Garaywa in Clinton, providing facilities and equipment to keep us up with the times. WMU has been blessed by your support, and all of us have enjoyed the fruits of our labor — together.

The newest WMU project is the building of an adult retreat center at Camp Garaywa.

Mississippi WMU recently designed and released to all church WMU directors a resource kit containing materials for helping every Mississippi Baptist to know about plans for Patterson Place, the adult lodge to be named in honor of Marjean Patterson, executive director of Mississippi WMU.

Materials in the kit are designed for use in many ways as the WMU director consults

with the pastor to determine the best use in their church.

A major suggestion is that a special Garaywa Day or Garaywa Week be set for each church, hopefully in February 1998. Suggestions for the emphasis include plans for recognizing the many people in the church whose lives have been touched by Garaywa experiences.

Suggestions include use of a video, plans for distribution of

brochures about Patterson Place, use of a permanent prayer calendar for the project, and presentation of a skit. A list of special gifts from which a church may select a definite item for which to be responsible, clip art and cartoons for the church publicity vehicles, posters, and a brochure containing a commitment envelope complete the items in the kit.

Explanation of Hand in Hand Garaywa Expands, the

giving process to finance the building of the retreat center, includes possible ways of handling gifts and commitments to the Garaywa fund.

If a WMU director did not receive a kit, or if someone in a church where there is not a WMU director needs a kit, contact the Mississippi WMU Office at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, Ms 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

## Staying Well Informed

### Good Stewardship

When the seeds of what would become Baptist Health Systems were first planted 86 years ago, they were nurtured with an ideal — to emulate Christ's healing ministry by easing the suffering of mankind, without regard to ability to pay. From the very beginning, people who came to Baptist for medical help who did not have the financial resources to pay have been received and treated. In a 1915 report, the hospital's leadership noted that of the 564 patients treated during the previous year, 124 were charity patients who could not pay for treatment, and 153 could only pay for part of their expenses. In 1949-50, the hospital provided nearly \$120,000 worth of services without charge. The rapid growth of the following decades saw the number of patients increase, and with it, the amount of charity care provided.

"Providing care to the needy is a basic mission for us, rooted in our Christian healing ministry," said Kurt Metzner, President and CEO of Baptist Health Systems. "Being good stewards of that mission requires that we help those who come to us, regardless of whether they can pay." In 1996-97, Baptist provided emergency room care to 5,590 people without insurance, many of whom were unable to pay. Nearly \$85 million worth of care was provided to people in need who could not pay their medical bills.

But there's another facet to that mission of service. Every day, Baptist employees provide their expertise to the community through health fairs and screenings, community education programs, lectures, and service or donations to organizations. One such program, *An Early Start to a Healthy Heart*, provides the expertise of Baptist's cardiac staff members and physicians to first graders at three schools in Hinds, Rankin and Madison Counties. Children in these programs learn how to build a foundation of good heart health by adopting healthy habits and have fun along the way. Through programs such as this one, Baptist can use the vast knowledge of its people to help enhance the lives of people in our communities. The result is not only healthier kids, but healthier communities years down the road. That's the real gift Baptist's 3,500 employees and physicians take home when they leave work each day.

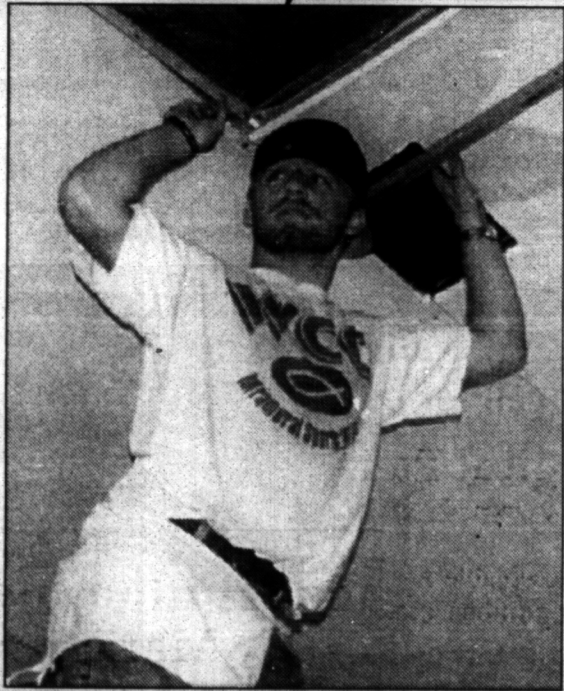
### Understanding the Benefits of Hospital Community Service

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**Baptist**  
HEALTH SYSTEMS

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### WCC/MC join hands



Arron Bilbo, a William Carey College (WCC) freshman, helps secure sheet rock to the ceiling of the Spanish mission church in Forest. Students from the Baptist Student Unions of both WCC and Mississippi College (MC) joined hands in this mission project on November 22 as an effort to help the mission church and to build closer ties between the two Baptist schools. (Photo by Carl M. White)



## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

**Paintings, drawings, and sculptures** by Meridian artist Larry Moore will be featured by the Lucile Parker Gallery at William Carey College in Hattiesburg beginning Thursday, Jan. 8 through Feb. 13, 1998. A reception will be held from 5:00 until 6:00 p.m. on Jan. 8. This exhibit can be viewed during the regular gallery hours, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, or by appointment by calling 582-6192.

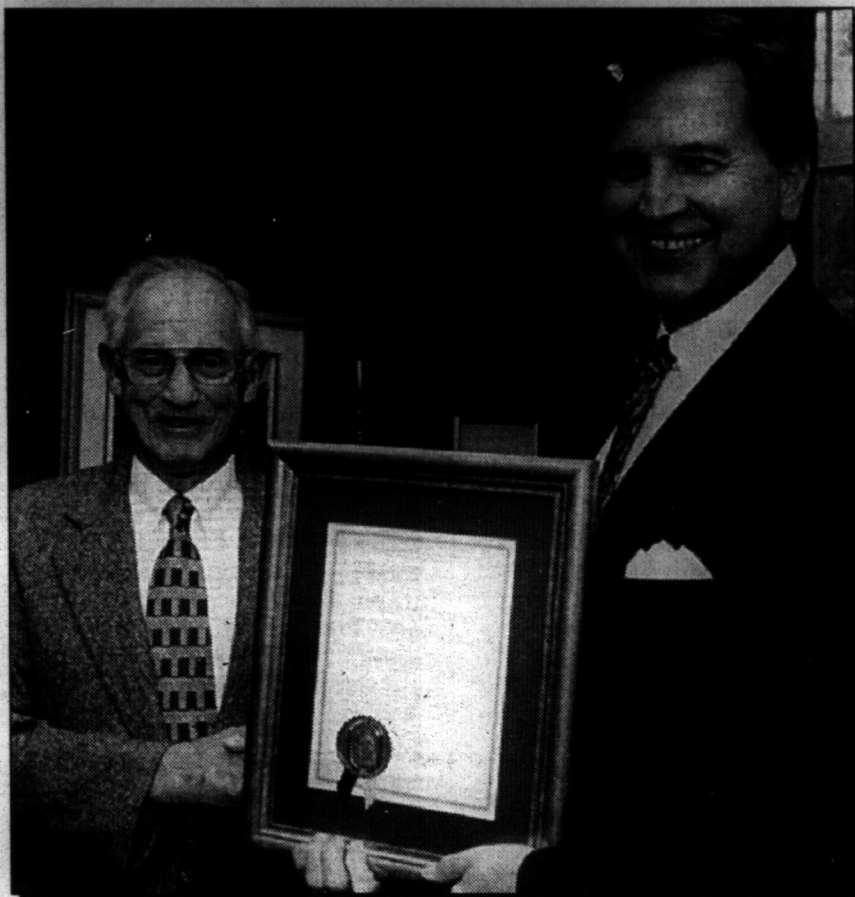
Portraiture are the hallmark of Larry Moore. He can be found drawing portraits in ebony, brown or charcoal pencils in large stores, malls, or conventions almost daily. Working quickly while engaged in articulate conversation with his subject, Moore captures an essence of each person in an economy of lines that is by no means a caricature, but is something people cherish and frame.

Moore, father of eight children, is a Newton County

native. He began sketching and drawing as a small child. He has been sketching professionally for 25 years. He will sketch at the Wal-Mart SuperCenter on Hardy Street Jan. 9-11. Prices vary, depending on the size and number of people, ranging from \$15 to \$25 and up. He also does commission portraits from photographs or live sittings.

The Lucile Parker Gallery is located in the Thomas Fine Arts Building on the William Carey College Hattiesburg campus.

**William Carey College** is accepting applications from gifted students to compete in the 1998 Talent Search which will be held Jan. 22 in the Thomas Fine Arts Building on campus. Students will compete in one of two categories: 7th through 9th or 10th through 12th grade. For more information, call the music department at (601) 582-6175.

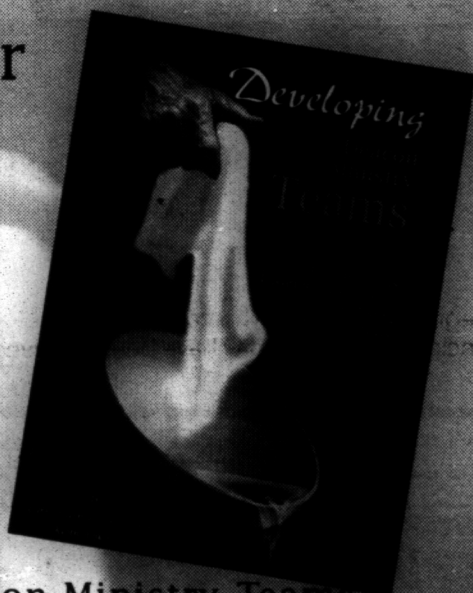


**An endowment scholarship** has been established at Mississippi College (MC) in honor of 1948 graduate James E. Parkman, a longtime Clinton resident and supporter of MC. In 1985 Parkman was inducted into the MC Sports Hall of Fame for his contributions as an athlete and coach. His career in education, before his retirement in 1985, including service with MC, Dekalb Community College and the Mississippi State Department of Education. Parkman is a member of First Church, Clinton.

The scholarship will provide

the funds to sponsor up to three students annually to participate in the school's growing foreign study program. Since 1989, the university has sent 150 students to London for a semester and more than 200 students on abbreviated programs of one week or more. Students have studied in China, Germany, France, and the former Soviet republics.

### Does your church face the deacon dilemma?



**Developing Deacon Ministry Teams**, a new eight-session resource, helps you resolve the deacon dilemma by...

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Robert Sheffield  
National Consultant in Deacon Ministry  
Baptist Sunday School Board

"...meets the need for fresh, new resources for deacon ministry...I recommend it."

Dr. Matt Buckles, Deacon Ministry

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Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.  
Minister of Counseling  
First Church, Jackson

Life Answers is on hiatus until Jan. 22.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



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## The Road to Everlasting Life



God intends for all his children to live with him forever, but the road to everlasting life is blocked. To find that road you must:

**Admit that you are a sinner.**  
*There is none righteous, not even one. (Rom. 3:10)*

**Accept God's love for you.**  
*God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)*

**Acknowledge Christ as Lord.**  
*If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved. (Rom. 10:9)*

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Mississippi Baptist Church for spiritual guidance.

## NAMES IN THE NEWS



Brian Hudson (above, left) of New Liberty Church, Tishomingo Association, presented Clyde Bray, wife of the late Lathon Bray, former pastor of New Liberty Church, an

attendance pin recognizing 39 years of Sunday School attendance on Oct. 5.

**Ordination services** for Tommy Dewitt, pastor of Oak Grove Church, Mississippi Association, will be held at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 11, at Providence Church, Jayess.

**First Church, Crystal Springs**, will honor James Beasley on his 25th anniversary as minister of music. A reception will be held in fellowship hall, Jan. 11, 2-4 p.m.



Bob Robinson (right), pastor of Maybank Church, Hattiesburg, presents a license to the Gospel Ministry to Samuel Nickles (left) on Oct. 12. Nickles came to be a Southern Baptist after serving for 22 years as a pastor of a Free Will Baptist Church. He is now available for pastorate or supply. For more information contact Bob Robinson at (601) 545-9251.

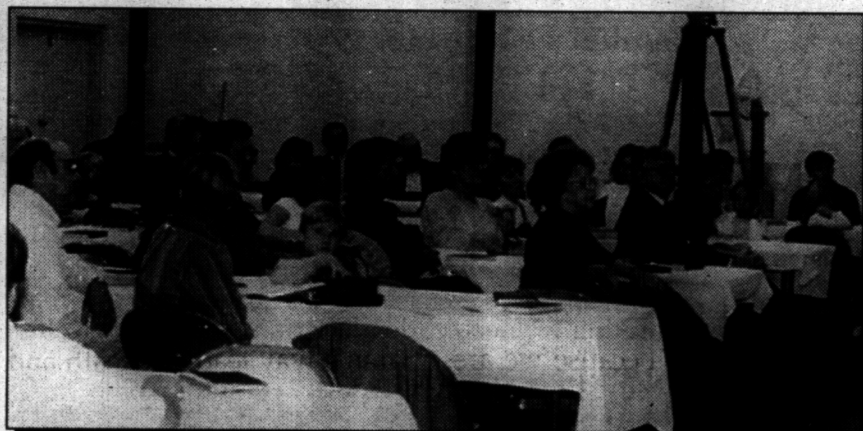
## STAFF CHANGES

Lonnie Myrick has resigned the pastorate of Terry Road Church, Jackson, to become the director of Grace Fellowship Ministries which will be located in Byram.

Ernest Ryals has resigned as minister of music at Hepzibah Church, Lawrence Association, effective Dec. 17.



Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, ordained (from the left) Steven Smith, Steve Thomas, and Eddie Wren on Sunday evening, Oct. 19. Smith is a graduate of Saltillo High, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary. He is currently serving as College Minister at First Church, Gilton. Smith is the son of Bobby and Diane Smith. Thomas is a graduate of Tupelo High and Union University. He recently served as Music and Youth Director at First Church, Loretto, TN, and is now available to lead praise and worship. Thomas is the son of Owen and Hazel Thomas. Wren is a graduate of Tupelo High, Union University, and is currently attending seminary in Memphis, where he serves as the Student Minister at First Church, Memphis. He is the son of Judy and Ted Ferguson and the late Jimmy Wren.



Members of Paris Church, Lafayette Association, are seated at tables at the dedication of their new activity center. Larry Wicker is pastor.



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## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### Growing in Grace

1 Peter 2:1-10

By Debbie Sills

Though Christians face trials and temptations every day, there is a way to overcome those times of despair. In this week's passage, Peter told his readers to pursue holiness and righteousness as a response to the salvation given to us. This involves a purifying departure from conformity with the world's standards and a union with Christ's exemplified behavior of love.

**A Growing People (2:1-3).** Peter begins chapter two with a gentle reproof to Christians. He is urging Christians to begin growing in spiritual maturity. To

Peter, it is time to get down to business so to speak. Many people in Peter's time, and in our day and age, have a notion that accepting Christ as Savior and Lord is the sum and substance of the Christian life. It requires much more than that however. Our salvation experience should trigger an overwhelming urge to get to know the God who loves us so much. We should turn from envy of others, deceitfulness, and hypocrisy. We should have a great desire to spend time talking with God and reading the precious Word he has given to us. Sadly, many Christians



Sills

his likes and dislikes, his past, his personality — is one of the most important things. How much more should we strive to know the Almighty God who loves us, gave us life, and then gave his own life to save us?

**A Serving People (2:4-8).** I am sure that it was impossible for Peter to write these verses without thinking of Jesus' own words to him: "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church" (Matt. 16:18). What Jesus meant was on the faith of the loyal

believer the Church is built. Peter reminds us we are living stones, part of the building of the Church. Christ is the cornerstone — the stone which all others are based upon. He gives placement, direction, and strength. Together, the stones raise a strong building apart, the stones are useless. Clearly the main point of Peter is that we as Christians should be built into the fabric of the Church. We are not destined to remain alone, but rather to join together in brotherly love and form a fellowship with one another and with God.

**A Chosen People (2:9-10).** In verse 9 we find those things to which the Christian is a witness. First of all, God has called believers out of darkness into his marvelous light. When a man comes to know Christ, he comes to know God and comes to know goodness and power to overcome temptations. Christ is

the standard by which all our actions and motives are tested. The fact that God chose us means we are no longer insignificant. We are important and have a purpose for living. Our identity is in Christ. Who we are and what we become are because of Christ. There are benefits to being a Christian: hope, love, eternal life. There is also responsibility. We are not permanent residents of this earth. Our ultimate goal is to be in God's presence, to look upon his face and experience the splendor of his heaven. Therefore, while we are here, we should do nothing which would keep us from obtaining that goal. We should not become entangled with the evil of this world. Christians are unique. Our actions should be unique and different from the world.

*Sills is advertising coordinator for The Baptist Record.*

## LIFE AND WORK

### Sexual Abuse

II Samuel 13:1-2, 6-15, 19-22

By Don Lum

In a world that uses careless words, the child of God is to speak with kindness and truth. In a world that is self-seeking the child of the King is to be a servant. In a world that is calloused and unforgiving we need to be different, because we are servants of the Most High.

Our study this week centers around a topic that we seldom venture to discuss — sexual abuse. In verse 31 of Genesis 1 we read that God saw all that he had made and it was very good. Then in Genesis 3, Eve listened to Satan's lie and every human since then has followed suit. As we exchange God's truth for Satan's lie, we allow to become

perverted what God created as good.

Sexual abuse is certainly not new, but it tears people apart today just as tragically as it did in David's family. The issue is ultimately life and death. God's way leads to life. Satan's way leads to death and the destruction of people, families, and even whole societies.

There is a definite right and wrong when it comes to the issue of sex. How can you be God's light in this matter?

**Sexual abuse is often conceived in frustration (13:1-2).** In the matter of sex, the answer is simple — one woman, one man, after marriage. That's God's plan. As we focus on pleasing him



Lum

nothing else should even be considered. The problem is many of us are not focused on God but on the world. The media and society in general encourage us in sexual matters, that whatever feels good is okay. If it is what you want, go after it.

**Sexual abuse is pursued in deception (13:6-11).** Amnon had a friend and he had a plan. Notice how Satan uses people! This story could be taken from 1998. Pretending, lying, deceiving, for the Christian red flags should go up everywhere in the face of these. If you are having to lie and pretend, something is wrong. God wants us to live in the light. He doesn't want us weighted down with guilt and shame. If this is where you are, seek God and start over. Nothing is worth the price you are paying.

**Sexual abuse is consummated in domination (13:12-15).**

Power, physical strength, and controlling people are issues in sexual abuse! Amnon was stronger than Tamar so he refused to listen to her. He violated her as he lay with her. He could, so he did. Then he hated her. He hated how he felt, but he got what he wanted. No longer frustrated, now he was finished with her. She wasn't important.

**Sexual abuse is multiplied in consequences (13:19-22).** For every action there is a reaction. For every choice there is a consequence. You will reap what you sow (Gal. 6:7). We don't always like it, but it is a truth that will never change. This story actually goes back to another case of sexual abuse: David and Bathsheba. Consequences do multiply.

David couldn't or wouldn't control his own sexual desires and thus provided a poor example for his son. In addition, David's lack of parental discipline allowed Amnon to grow

up getting whatever he desired. That proved a disastrous combination when Amnon's focus became Tamar. Amnon chose poorly. He allowed his selfish desires to overrule his senses. The consequences proved costly for untold numbers of people. Amnon lost his life, Tamar was disgraced, David felt the pain of losing a son he dearly loved, and he was left with knowledge that his own son was not what it needed to be. The people who loved and trusted King David looked on in disbelief and above all, God was pained. Remember, God hates sin because sin always hurts his creation.

Live in the light this year and find ways to share it in your corner of the world. Sexual abuse will only be avoided as one person at a time focuses on God and then chooses life.

*Lum is a consultant in the Miss. Baptist Evangelism Dept.*

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Staying on track

Genesis 35:1-15

By Edna Martin Ellison

Most church rolls are embarrassingly sprinkled with names of "spiritual dropouts" — members who once were active in church life. What are reasons for this phenomenon? Can we do anything to prevent it? Events recorded in Genesis 35 suggest several actions we can take to avoid becoming dropouts.

**Remember Your Spiritual Roots (35:1-7).** Two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, had murdered residents and plundered the city of Shechem in revenge for their sister Dinah's rape (Gen. 34). Jacob must have been worried and disappointed with his sons' violence.

God spoke to Jacob and urged him to return to Bethel where angels had first appeared

to him in a dream (Gen. 28:10-22).

When times get rough, we can renew our faith by returning to the point of our spiritual roots. To renew Jacob's faith, God told him to build an altar to God at Bethel. Jacob directed his household to do three things before they moved: throw away all idols, purify themselves, and put on clean clothes. We can compare their actions to our repentance from sin, baptism, and putting on the righteousness of Jesus.

Even though he himself had grown spiritually, Jacob's family had failed to worship God exclusively. Before they left, he took all their idols and earrings associated with paganism and buried them. (v. 4).



Ellison

renamed the place El-bethel, which means "God of Bethel."

**Refuse to Be Distracted (35:8).** Soon Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died (v. 8), the group buried her under an oak at Bethel and named the tree "Allon Bacuth," which means "oak of weeping." This funeral is a good example of an event that may discourage us and set us back in our spiritual development. Though this was a sad event, Jacob seems to have continued in his objective of spiritual maturity.

**Focus on Your New Identity (35:9-10).** God appeared to Jacob again and re-emphasized his new name, Israel (see also

Gen. 32:28). Just as Jacob took a new name after an encounter with God, we also have a new identity when we establish a relationship with the Lord. We call ourselves Christians and have a new life in Christ.

**Trust God's Promises (35:11-12).** After re-emphasizing the new name, God then renewed the covenant he had made with Abraham and Isaac, now promised to Jacob (vs. 11-12). We also can trust God's promises given in his word.

**Renew Commitment to God (35:13-15).** After God ascended (v. 13), Jacob worshiped (vs. 14-15). He renewed his faith in an almighty God. Like us, he found renewed spiritual maturity as he worshiped.

Questions to consider

1. Where did your pilgrimage of faith begin (v. 1)? Thank God now for the time you first encountered him.

2. Are you absolutely clean of things that defile you spiritually (vs. 2-4)? Like Jacob's household, each of us needs to

"clean house" occasionally.

3. Can you recall times God has protected you just as he did Jacob when he left Shechem (v. 5)? Pause now and thank God for his protection.

4. How have you stayed on track in your spiritual development even through discouragement or distractions (v. 8)?

5. How have you lived up to your name of Christian (v. 10)?

6. Do you have a personal covenant with God (vs. 11-12)? List God's promises you have claimed.

7. How long has it been since you renewed your commitment to God (vs. 13-15)? Now is the time.

Like all of us, Jacob had flaws in his personality. However, Jacob had one redeeming feature: he had had an encounter with God. He was obedient and he kept renewing his faith. He refused to be a spiritual dropout. What a good example he sets for us!

*Ellison is a consultant in the Miss. Woman's Missionary Union.*



## Bibliocipher

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KVH CMBH.

DZMXUZEJ JTUVJO-JTM:

MVU

Clue: E=B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Isaiah Fifty-four: Ten

# 'Ambassadors' host United Nations lunch

NEW YORK (BP) — Bob Reccord, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board (NAMB), told representatives of nearly half the United Nations (UN) delegations, "I feel comfortable standing before you because I too am an ambassador ... an ambassador of Jesus Christ. I am honored to represent to you the one I serve: the Lord God Almighty."

Reccord served as host of a NAMB-sponsored luncheon at the United Nations Dec. 12 attended by 250 UN ambassadors and other top officials.

The event marked the beginning of Southern Baptists' 25th year of ministry at the UN. Included in the audience were nearly 30 ambassadors, including those from Libya, Turkey, India, El Salvador, Bulgaria, and the League of Arab States along with top officials from delegations from China, Algeria, Ukraine, and South Africa.

Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, as featured speaker, told the international leaders that personal character and integrity are the key issues facing his state, the United States as well as the world.

"Most people think the answers to problems in our world are related to improvements in education and economics," the former Southern

Baptist pastor said "but it occurred to me that some of the most miserable people have the best education and the most wealth. ... I believe the answer is character."

Citing statistics on the cost of a host of social ills, such as crime, chemical abuse, and teen pregnancy, Huckabee said, "Most of the governmental expenditures of my state are not to improve education or build infrastructure, but to correct the failure of a society whose individuals have lost the sense of personal character. We're spending money not to help people live better, but to help them get out of trouble that could have been prevented had the level of their character been higher."

Huckabee was elected lieutenant governor of Arkansas in 1993, but in 1996 became governor after his predecessor, Jim Guy Tucker, was convicted in the Whitewater investigation. Huckabee has since written a book titled, "Character IS The Issue" published by Broadman & Holman of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"We live in a world where we all want to make up our own rules, but if we live that way, the



AMBASSADORS — Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee (right) presented Bob Reccord, president of the North American Mission Board, with a copy of his book after keynoting a NAMB-sponsored luncheon Dec. 12 at the United Nations in New York City. (BP Photo by Martin King)

result is disaster," Huckabee said. "Character is when we come to the place where we no longer make up our own rules, but we seek to root our laws in values that are eternal rather than values that are constantly changing."

That root, according to Huckabee, is the golden rule. "Those of us who govern

must be governed not by the culture or the current temperature of society but by an eternal God."

Huckabee shared with the delegates testimony to the role faith in Jesus Christ plays in his own life.

"The only permanence in my life is my relationship with Christ and the hope that relationship gives me," he said.

## Kentucky conservatives form new organization

ASHLAND, Ky. (ABP) — Conservative Baptists recently formed an organization to promote the Southern Baptist

Convention's (SBC) interests in Kentucky, including funding for the SBC's budget and support for its Kentucky-based seminary.

The group, called Southern Baptists of Kentucky, is not interested in "breaking off" from the Kentucky Baptist Convention (KBC), said Mike Routt, the group's president.

"We're not angry at anybody," he said. "We just feel very strongly about what we're doing," he said.

Participants in the Dec. 9 meeting, a by-invitation-only event held at an undisclosed location in Elizabethtown, voted on four major recommendations, Routt said:

— Naming the group Southern Baptists of Kentucky.

— Adopting a purpose statement which says the organization exists "to preach the gospel, help churches fulfill the Great Commission, maintain doctrinal heritage and integrity and promote the work of the Cooperative Program."

— Affirmed launching of a new newspaper to "positively promote the unique relationship between the KBC and the SBC, tell the story of the good things that are occurring across the SBC, highlight the exciting ministries taking place through the Cooperative Program and detail the wonderful news about the ministry of our flagship seminary, Southern Seminary."

— Agreed to conduct "evangelistic rallies" across the state annually to focus on "prayer for our denomination, state con-

vention, and sister churches."

At these rallies, which Routt said could number as many as 10 in 1998, "pulpit guests will be invited to preach in order to challenge and encourage sister churches in the fulfilling of the Great Commission."

KBC President Gayle Toole, who was unaware of the group's formation until faxed a copy of a news release Dec. 16, said he was saddened by the news.

Jim Hawkins, the KBC's interim executive secretary-treasurer, said it would be inappropriate for him to comment on the news, which he received by fax the same day media were notified.

Newly elected KBC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Bill Mackey does not begin his work until Feb. 1.

Routt said Southern Baptists of Kentucky should not be seen as the opposite equivalent of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship (KBF), a moderate group supportive of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

"I don't know where on the spectrum you would put us, because there are a lot of centrists in our state who identify with us with regard to their concerns about the drifting of relationship between the KBC and the SBC."

"You couldn't put us at the opposite end of the spectrum because our organization is going to be pretty inclusive."

## Texas newspaper clarifies BGCT leader's comments

AUSTIN, Texas (BP) — A Nov. 11 story in the Austin American Statesmen containing statements attributed to outgoing Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) President Charles Wade was inaccurate, according to the Texas newspaper in a correction published Nov. 28.

The Texas newspaper's page A1 story, written by staffer Kim Sue Lia Perkes, paraphrased Wade's remarks on Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders' focus. She wrote that Wade said the SBC is focusing on forcing "all Baptists to believe the Bible is factually scientifically true. If they don't back off from insisting on biblical inerrancy as a Baptist litmus test, then they will drive more and more Texas Baptists away."

In fact, Wade said, "Southern Baptist leaders will have our support if they focus on missions and evangelism, but they will drive more and more Texas Baptists away if the focus on requiring conformity as a condition of cooperation."

The newspaper, in its correction notice on page A2, said, "Wade did not discuss the subject (biblical inerrancy) during his presidential address but spoke instead against the SBC's effort to enforce 'conformity as a condition of cooperation' among its churches."

As a result of the newspaper's delay in making the correction several stories in Baptist Press and Baptist state papers carried the Austin American Statesman's version of Wade's comments. BGCT officials gave Baptist Press a copy of Wade's comments which were published in BP's Nov. 25 release as well as a statement by a newspaper spokesman that at that time affirmed the Nov. 11 story. The information was part of a larger story about BGCT officials commenting on the formation of a new Texas convention, Southern Baptists of Texas, following the annual meeting of the BGCT in Austin Nov. 10-11.

Wade is pastor of First Church, Arlington, Texas.